

***LIWETAN GERHANA* TRADITION FOR PREGNANT WOMEN IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC LAW AND COMMUNITY CULTURE (CASE STUDY IN KLINTEREJO SOOKO MOJOKERTO)**

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the religious and cultural values embedded in the practice of *Liwetan Gerhana*, as well as its interpretation within Islamic law. Traditions are customs passed down through generations, each carrying profound significance for its practitioners. Often, these traditions are deemed sacred and essential to uphold. This research investigates the *Liwetan Gerhana* tradition for pregnant women, considering both Islamic legal perspectives and the local cultural context. This tradition represents a cultural heritage with deep meaning for the practising community, especially for pregnant women, who are seen as requiring protection and blessings. In Islamic jurisprudence, a solar or lunar eclipse (*gerhana*) is regarded as a manifestation of God's greatness, typically observed through worship rather than specific rituals. The research method employed is fieldwork, with data collected via in-depth interviews and direct observation in Klinterejo Village, Sooko. The tradition is recognised not only as a cultural *ritual* but is also seen as compatible with Islamic principles, promoting the health and well-being of pregnant women. Findings indicate that, while this tradition has strong cultural roots, the community has successfully harmonised it with Islamic teachings, resulting in a dynamic syncretism widely accepted by the community. This fusion of culture and religion demonstrates the community's ability to adapt to contemporary changes while preserving its cultural identity.

Keywords: Tradition, *Liwetan*, *Gerhana*, Pregnant Women

A. Introduction

Tradition is all the various things that are passed down in the past to us and are used, used and are still valid at this time or at this time (Haryono, 2022). In other words, tradition is everything that is done by the community continuously and is considered a true belief (Humairoh & Mufti, 2021). By some Muslims, tradition is often identified with *urf*, which is a custom or habit that is practised repeatedly, such as *weton selametan*, *keenduri*, naming a child, *ngupati* or *ngupati*, *mitoni*, and *brokoban*.

The lunar eclipse is a natural event that is familiar to the community. The proof is that many traditional activities are organised by several communities when the lunar eclipse event comes. A lunar eclipse can be a scourge for pregnant women because many myths hit pregnant women during a lunar eclipse. These myths are believed and considered taboo for pregnant women. In the social and cultural context of Javanese society, traditions are still highly valued and implemented. Java is known for a variety of traditions that cover many aspects, ranging from traditions for babies in the womb marriage to death.

These traditions are then carried out by people in the area for generations and develop into part of their beliefs. Traditions in the Javanese region vary widely; one example is traditions related to pregnant women. Javanese people consider pregnancy to be a sensitive matter because it involves the life of the baby. The existence of that life is very important, whether it is alive or dead. To protect the health of mothers and babies, Javanese people carry out several traditions that have philosophical values and are carried out in a sacred manner and passed down from generation to generation.

The tradition of *liwetan* during the eclipse performed by pregnant women in Klinterejo Sooko Mojokerto Village is a local cultural practice that has been going on for generations. This tradition is considered a form of effort to protect the fetus from the negative influence of the eclipse, which is believed to have a bad impact on pregnancy. From a cultural perspective, this tradition contains symbolic values that reflect the community's belief in the power of nature and the role of humans in maintaining the balance.

Villagers believe that the eclipse phenomenon is not only a natural event but also has a spiritual dimension that can affect human health and safety conditions, especially for pregnant women. Therefore, the *liwetan* ritual is performed as a form of endeavour to ask for protection and welfare for pregnant women and their fetuses. This tradition is usually carried out by gathering, cooking, praying for safety, especially for the

baby-to-be and the baby's mother, and eating together typical food that is served simply but holds symbolic meaning.

In a cultural context, this tradition not only reflects the community's belief in the power of nature and superstition but also shows the value of togetherness, cooperation, and strong social solidarity among the villagers. However, from the perspective of Islamic law, questions arise regarding the sharia basis of this practice. How does Islam view traditions related to belief in natural phenomena? Does this tradition have a basis in religious teachings, or does it contain elements that contradict the principles of tawhid? For the local community, *liwetan gerhana* has a symbolic meaning and strong spiritual value, which is related to local belief in the power of nature and the protection of the divine. However, in the perspective of Islamic law, questions arise regarding the basis of Sharia and how this tradition is viewed from a religious point of view.

This research aims to examine the tradition of *liwetan gerhana* performed for pregnant women in Klinterejo Village by highlighting two main aspects: the perspective of Islamic law and the cultural values that develop in the local community. Through a case study approach, this article will review how this tradition is practised, the meanings held by the community, as well as the extent to which this practice conforms or contradicts the principles in Islamic teachings.

B. Research Methods

The research method used is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This approach is suitable because the focus is on understanding the experiences and meanings that people give to the *liwetan gerhana* tradition, especially for pregnant women. The use of qualitative methods provides flexibility in collecting data and understanding the meaning behind this cultural practice. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the phenomenon of the eclipse *liwetan* tradition in depth in the social and cultural context of the Klinterejo Village community, Sooko, Mojokerto. Data collection was done through several techniques, including:

1. In-depth Interview: An in-depth interview is the process of obtaining information for research purposes using question and answer while meeting face-to-face between the interviewer and the informant or interviewee, with or without the use of an interview guide, where the interviewer and informant are involved in a relatively long social life (Sutopo, 2006, p. 72). Researchers conducted interviews with community leaders, scholars, and pregnant women involved in this

- tradition. This interview aims to explore their understanding, experience and views on the *liwetan* eclipse tradition.
2. **Participatory Observation:** Participant observation is an observation in which the person observing the subject participates and takes part in the life of the subject being observed. This technique is usually used to examine the social life of the community (Adi, 2021). The researcher is directly involved in the implementation of the *liwetan gerhana* ritual to directly observe the process and meaning contained in the tradition. Through this observation, researchers can record important details that may not be revealed in interviews.
 3. **Documentation Study:** According to Kriyantono, this method can be used for qualitative and quantitative research. This documentation method can be used to explore past data systematically and objectively, framing, semiotics, discourse analysis, and qualitative content analysis (Kriyantono, 2022). Researchers also collected data from relevant documents, such as historical records, articles, and previous research reports regarding the liwetan eclipse tradition and the view of Islamic law on cultural practices. Data analysis was done thematically by identifying patterns that emerged from interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings of this study are expected to provide deeper insights into the relationship between tradition, Islamic law, and community culture, as well as its impact on pregnant women in Klinterejo Village.

C. Results and Discussion

1. The First Aspect of the Discussion

Traditions are an important part of people's lives that reflect the values, beliefs and cultural identity of a community. In general, traditions can be defined as a set of practices, customs or rituals that are passed down from generation to generation, often linked to the beliefs and values held by a group of people (Koentjaraningrat, 2003).

The *liwetan* tradition during an eclipse is a local cultural phenomenon that is still carried out for generations in Klinterejo Village, Sooko, Mojokerto. This tradition was born from the community's belief that eclipses, especially lunar eclipses, can have a bad influence on pregnant women and their fetuses. In cultural studies, Clifford Geertz revealed that Javanese culture is heavily influenced by mystical elements that believe in the close relationship between humans and nature (Geertz, 1976). In the context of the *liwetan* tradition, this symbolism is reflected through the ritual of eating together, which is interpreted as protection for the baby in the womb.

This study found that the tradition of the *livetan* eclipse for pregnant women in Klinterejo Village is still widely practised and accepted as an important part of local culture. Local people believe that eclipses can bring negative influences on the fetus, and therefore, the *livetan* ritual is considered a way to protect pregnant women and their fetuses. *Livetan* is usually performed by holding a meal together on banana leaves, accompanied by special prayers offered by local traditional leaders. This tradition is deeply rooted in Javanese beliefs, which associate eclipses with supernatural influences. This ritual is lived as a way to harmonise human relations with nature, as well as a preventive measure against disturbances that may arise during the eclipse.

Some of the more religious communities continue to practice this tradition, but with adjustments, for example, by combining it with more Islamic prayers and replacing traditional prayers with recitations of Qur'anic verses. Local religious leaders also tolerate it as long as there are no elements of shirk or beliefs that contradict the *aqidah*. Apart from being a spiritual endeavour, *livetan* also serves as a means of strengthening social relations between residents. The process of serving food and eating together creates strong social bonds among residents, especially among pregnant women.

However, religious aspects are not neglected either. Local people try to adapt this traditional practice to Islamic teachings, such as replacing conventional mantras with prayers and Qur'anic recitations. From the perspective of Islamic law, this tradition does not have a strong basis in *sharia*. Islam sees the eclipse phenomenon as a natural event that must be addressed by praying *kbhusuf* (for lunar eclipses) and *kusuf* (for solar eclipses). In Islamic teachings, eclipses are not associated with mysticism or supernatural powers but rather a sign of Allah's power accompanied by the recommendation to pray and dhikr.

The Klinterejo community tends to adapt this tradition to suit Islamic values, for example, by replacing traditional mantras with Islamic prayers and Qur'anic recitations. This adjustment shows the community's ability to maintain traditions while adhering to religious principles (personal communication, Ahmad, October 10, 2024).

Overall, the *livetan gerhana* tradition in Klinterejo Village survives as part of the local community culture but with religious adjustments that integrate Islamic teachings. This creates a balance between culture and religion that continues to be practised in daily life, where social and spiritual aspects are fused in a simple yet meaningful ritual form.

This research shows that the people of Klinterejo Village do not fully see *liwetan* as a religious *ritual* but rather as a social tradition that can strengthen relationships between residents.

2. The Second Aspect of the Discussion

According to experts, a lunar eclipse is an eclipse that occurs because the moon moves into the shadow of the Earth's core so that its light is a reflection of the sun's light that is covered so that it is not visible from the Earth. A solar eclipse is an eclipse that occurs because the moon moves so that it blocks the sun's rays from the earth so that the sun is not visible from the Earth. However, for Javanese people, an eclipse is a sacred event, especially for pregnant women. The relationship between the two as it relates to the solar eclipse myths held by Javanese people (Mujab, 2016).

Javanese people believe that a solar eclipse occurs because a giant (Buto) swallows the sun. Therefore, because of its association with pregnant women, a tradition is carried out to protect the baby she is carrying from the danger brought by the giant. In the context of this process, Javanese people believe that asking God for help is also a way to do devotion to God. One of the signs of *pasrah* and *sumarah* in Javanese society is that whether or not the desired goal is achieved is fully surrendered to God's will (Hartanto & Nurhayati, 2017).

This tradition carried out by the Javanese and Balinese people is true and has been done by their ancestors. According to Iskandar's view, eclipse-related myths also enveloped pre-Islamic Arabia or the so-called Jahiliyah period. At least, that's how the stories are found in the Prophet's hadith. Imam Bukhari's saheeh hadith states that when Prophet Ibrahim, the son of the Prophet, died in 8 AH, the people of Medina at that time associated the death with a solar eclipse on the same day. On the day of Prophet Ibrahim's death, (Usman, 2018). This has been explained by several hadiths narrated by Imam Bukhari.

This research reveals the dynamics of the Klinterejo Village community in maintaining the *liwetan gerhana* tradition, especially for pregnant women, despite changes in the religious aspect. The findings show that along with the increasing understanding of Islam, there is a tendency for the community to be more critical of elements of the tradition that are considered incompatible with Islamic teachings. The local community has also modified the *liwetan* ritual, adding elements of Islamic worship such as recitation of Qur'anic verses or prayers derived from Islamic teachings. This ritual is no longer fully seen as

part of mystical beliefs but rather a form of togetherness wrapped in religious nuances.

Despite changes in the religious aspect, the social essence of *liwetan* is still maintained. This tradition is still considered a means to strengthen relationships between citizens, where the community participates in *gotong royong* activities and supports each other, especially pregnant women who are believed to need community support during pregnancy. This shows that socio-cultural aspects remain an integral part of the *liwetan* tradition in Klinterejo Village.

This research provides insight into how syncretism can occur naturally in society, especially in rural areas. In this context, adaptation to local traditions has significant implications for Islamic studies, where Islamic law can accommodate local cultural aspects as long as they do not conflict with the values of *tawhid*. In addition, this finding also contributes to the understanding of how Islamic communities in Indonesia, especially in Java, can manage traditions while adhering to religious teachings.

3. The Third Aspect of the Discussion

According to anthropologists, the essence of culture is semiotics, a form of exploration of the world of signs and signals. Therefore, cultural analysis is not based on non-cultural research experiments such as law, but culture is analysed based on the interpretation of meaning. Culture comes from the word *culture* with the prefix *to* and suffix *an*. In Sanskrit, *buddhayah* is the plural form of *buddhi* (reason or intellect), which is defined as things related to the human mind. Therefore, culture is always in favour of human reason and intellect, and understanding that is not in harmony with that understanding (reason) cannot be classified as a definition of culture (Sutrisno, 2019). In this tradition, three processions must be carried out by the baby's mother, namely:

- a. Cooking *liwet* rice, eclipse *liwetan* rice is one form of a culinary tradition that appears at the moment of the eclipse, especially in Klinterejo Village, Sooko, Mojokerto. This tradition aims to express gratitude to God for natural phenomena and to ask for safety for pregnant women who are believed to be vulnerable when an eclipse occurs. The dishes used in this ritual have a deep symbolic meaning, especially components such as *liwet* rice, threatened side dishes, and boiled eggs.

Nasi liwet in this tradition symbolises togetherness and prosperity. Cooked with coconut milk and simple spices, the rice implies simplicity of life and closeness to nature. In Javanese culture, rice is a symbol of prosperity and abundance, so in the *liwetan* tradition, rice is the centre of the meal for all participants. A typical side dish served is *terancam*, which consists of raw vegetables such as string beans, cabbage and basil leaves mixed with seasoned grated coconut. The meaning of *terancam* is related to freshness and new life, which, in the context of the *Liwetan Gerhana* tradition, is connected to the hope that pregnant women and fetuses remain healthy and protected from all dangers. The freshness of the raw vegetables reflects the vitality and hope for a healthy birth.

Not forgetting the addition of the threatened side dish is a boiled egg, in this dish, the boiled egg symbolises new life and birth. Eggs are often associated with symbols of fertility and hope for a safe birth. In the *liwetan* tradition, this boiled egg is interpreted as a prayer for the health of the baby in the womb so that the birth process is smooth and the mother and baby are safe. In Islam, there is no prohibition to hold a meal together to be grateful for natural phenomena, as long as it does not contain elements of shirk. Scholars agree that the eclipse is a moment of reflection to increase worship and prayer, which is translated into the form of traditions such as *liwetan*. This tradition also contains elements of social togetherness. Where the whole community gathers, eats together from one *tampah*, and shares prayers and good wishes for pregnant women and their families. This is in line with the values of togetherness and cooperation that are highly valued in Javanese culture.

- b. Waking the baby-to-be in some cultures in Indonesia, especially among the Javanese, there is a belief that the baby-to-be in the womb needs to be “woken up” during the eclipse. This is often done by tapping the pregnant mother’s stomach or talking to the fetus as if the baby can hear and react. This action is believed to be a way to protect the baby from the bad influence of the eclipse (personal communication, *Nyai Siti*, October 10, 2024).

This belief is based on the myth that eclipses have negative energy that can affect the fetus in the womb, such as causing birth defects. Therefore, the ritual of “waking” the fetus is carried out as an effort to avoid this influence. This ritual is also done as a form of love and prayer from the mother and family so that the baby is born healthy. Although scientifically, this action does not have a

strong basis, in some psychological studies, talking or interacting with the fetus during pregnancy can have a positive impact. For example, studies have shown that the fetus can recognise the voice of its mother and father, which contributes to emotional bonding after the baby is born. However, from an Islamic perspective, this act of waking up the baby has no basis in sharia.

- c. Pregnant women hide under the bed, in the tradition of Javanese society, there is a tradition for pregnant women to hide under the bed during an eclipse. This is done because of the belief that eclipses, both solar and lunar, can have a bad impact on the fetus. Traditional people believe that eclipses can cause babies to be born deformed or exposed to calamities if pregnant women do not follow certain rituals, such as hiding under the bed or covering the stomach with certain objects.

This belief is part of the myths that developed in various cultures, especially in the Javanese region and is usually related to the fear of natural phenomena that are considered mystical. Although in Islam, the eclipse is seen as a sign of Allah's greatness and a moment for introspection and prayer, local beliefs like this still live in society as a cultural heritage.

D. Conclusion

Research on the Liwetan Gerhana tradition for pregnant women from the perspective of Islamic law and community culture, especially in Klinterejo Village, Sooko, Mojokerto, shows a harmonious interaction between religious values and local traditions. This tradition is not only a form of local wisdom but also a form of belief in the signs of God's greatness that can protect pregnant women and their fetuses.

Overall, this research reveals that the Liwetan Gerhana tradition is a clear example of the acculturation process between Islamic values and local traditions. This confirms that in the context of a religious society, the preservation of local culture can go hand in hand with religious practices without causing contradictions. The results of this study make an important contribution to the understanding of the relationship between religion and culture, as well as its relevance in the dynamics of modern society. Thus, this study recommends the importance of strengthening education about the culture-friendly Islamic Shari'a so that good local traditions can still be preserved and accepted within the framework of Islamic law.

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